

Oregon - 1st District

1 Les AuCoin (D)

Of Forest Grove — Elected 1974

Born: Oct. 21, 1942, Redmond, Ore.
Education: Pacific U., B.A. 1969.
Military Career: Army, 1961-64.
Occupation: Journalist; public relations executive.
Family: Wife, Susan Swearingen; two children.
Religion: Protestant.
Political Career: Ore. House, 1971-75, majority leader, 1973-75.
Capitol Office: 2159 Rayburn Bldg. 20515; 225-0855.



In Washington: One of many articulate reform-minded Democrats elected in the 1974 sweep, AuCoin chose a different approach from most of them, generally forsaking the turmoil of House politics for the intricacies of federal spending formulas.

He helped write some of those formulas himself over three terms on the Banking Committee; in 1981 he moved to Appropriations, where the emphasis on numbers and detail is even more pronounced.

In early 1983, though, AuCoin was highly visible as one of the leading supporters of a nuclear weapons freeze. After the first day of debate on the issue which lasted 13 hours and left the House in disarray, AuCoin blasted the floor manager, Foreign Affairs Chairman Clement F. Zablocki of Wisconsin, calling him "ill-prepared." AuCoin convened a group of freeze supporters to plan strategy for the rest of the debate, and was active on the floor as a modified freeze resolution passed the House in early May.

AuCoin's concern over defense issues prodded him to join the Defense Subcommittee at Appropriations in 1983. He said he wanted to combat rampant "pork-barreling" in defense contracts and to oppose major weapons systems such as the MX missile and the B-1 bomber. AuCoin also said he hoped to cut funds for two planned nuclear aircraft carriers, but added, "If I can't stop both, I would like to stop one."

Elsewhere on Appropriations, and on Banking before that, AuCoin has specialized in housing, an issue economically crucial to a state dependent on the timber industry. In 1982 he sponsored a bill allowing low- and middle-income families to receive reduced-rate mortgages on new homes. Republicans Thomas B. Evans Jr. of Delaware and Tom Corcoran of Illinois had proposed similar legislation, but Democrats were eager to make housing their

issue in the election year and AuCoin was able to tack his competing proposal onto a supplemental funding bill.

Despite Republican support for the measure, however, President Reagan vetoed the funding bill because it included the \$1 billion housing program. "The message the president sends to the Pacific Northwest" AuCoin said, "... is to drop dead." The House failed by 17 votes to override the veto.

Earlier, as a member of the Banking Committee in the 95th Congress, AuCoin was in the thick of a housing "formula fight," this one over how to award urban block grant money to local communities. The issue matched the urban Northeast and Midwest — advocating money to fix up old housing stock — against the South and West, which simply wanted to use income levels as the basis for the funds.

To the surprise of many members, AuCoin spoke for the older cities of the East. "My allegiance is to the West," he said. "But I also belong to the United States." It was not quite that simple — AuCoin's home base of Portland, although a western city, has housing stock as old as that in many parts of the East. But it was agreed that AuCoin played an important role in defeating the Sun Belt forces on the issue, and setting a precedent for future fights of that kind.

When he moved to Appropriations, AuCoin took a seat on that panel's Interior Subcommittee, from which he has challenged Interior Secretary James G. Watt on the issue of offshore oil drilling. In 1981 AuCoin successfully sponsored an amendment barring the department from leasing four basins off the California coast for oil and gas exploration.

The following year AuCoin persuaded the panel to ban drilling off most of the northern California coast, although the scope of the ban was reduced in conference. In addition, AuCoin

Los AuCoin, D-Ore.

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Decisions shaping Oregon and the entire Northwest are made by the banks, businesses and law firms of downtown Portland. Many of the important decision-makers live in AuCoin's district, in the fashionable West Hills area of the city or the suburbs beyond the western city limits.

Much of this affluent professional community identifies with the Republican Party, but Democrats such as AuCoin have considerable strength there, and independent voters wield decisive influence. In 1980 independent presidential candidate John B. Anderson won nearly 14 percent of the vote in western Multnomah County, leaving Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan virtually tied.

As one moves farther west into Washington County, GOP strength increases. Republicans outnumbered Democrats in the county in 1980 for the first time, reflecting the enormous demographic changes of the preceding decade, in which population grew 55 percent. During the 1970s, modest-sized bedroom communities such as Beaverton, Tigard and Hillsboro blossomed into economic satellites of Portland, with electronics and computer firms such as Hewlett-

Western Portland and Suburbs

Packard, Intel and Tektronix providing jobs.

The strongest Democratic areas of the district are along the Columbia River and Pacific coast in the fishing and logging counties of Columbia, Clatsop, Tillamook and Lincoln. Columbia has voted for every Democratic presidential candidate since 1932; Clatsop went for Adlai Stevenson in 1956 and has stayed Democratic since.

Astoria (Clatsop County), plagued by 20 percent unemployment in 1982, hopes to find economic salvation by improving its harbor facilities to handle large shipments of coal from Western states to new markets in Japan, Korea and Taiwan. Economic conditions in the early 1980s sharply curbed logging activities in the Siuslaw National Forest, pushing the jobless rate in Tillamook County above 20 percent. Tourism props up the economy in some coastal areas.

Population: 526,840. White 503,854 (96%), Black 2,717 (1%), American Indian, Eskimo and Aleut 3,617 (1%), Asian and Pacific Islander 8,283 (2%). Spanish origin 11,485 (2%). 18 and over 387,395 (74%), 65 and over 59,440 (11%). Median age: 31.

supported the panel when it voted to ban oil and gas drilling in all wilderness areas. That provision, despite Senate opposition, survived in conference.

AuCoin promoted still another constituent interest on the Merchant Marine Committee, where he served until 1981. Early in his career there, he worked on legislation establishing a 200-mile U.S. fishing limit and argued successfully for legislation to give domestic fish processors the first crack at fish caught within it. In 1981 he worked to stop budget cuts, backed by President Reagan, that affected the Coast Guard.

At Home: Since 1974, when AuCoin became the first Democrat ever to represent the 1st District, Republican challengers have insisted he is too liberal for his constituency. AuCoin refuted that argument by increasing his margin of victory in three successive elections.

In 1982, however, redistricting and a lavishly financed GOP effort caused him to slip to 54 percent — hardly the brink of disaster, but

nonetheless the lowest tally of his House career.

The Republican nominee in 1982 was Bill Moshofsky, a former executive with the forest products firm of Georgia-Pacific and former board member of the Business-Industry Political Action Committee. Moshofsky's corporate contacts enabled him to outspend AuCoin significantly.

Moshofsky told voters that Oregon's problems were not the fault of Reaganomics, but of restrictive environmental regulations that diverted capital to compliance and away from job creation. He impressed many in the lumber and wood products industries, which had been hampered by high interest rates before Reagan became president. But the district's fishing and logging counties were wary of him as a former corporate executive, and all of them went for AuCoin, albeit by margins substantially lower than he had built up in past campaigns.

AuCoin lost in conservative Washington County, the most populous in the district, but he won comfortably among the huge indepen-

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dent electorate in Multnomah County, where Portland is located.

A journalist by training, AuCoin had drifted off into public relations work by 1968, when the Vietnam War motivated him to become active in politics. He campaigned for Sen. Eugene McCarthy, who won the Democratic presidential primary in Oregon.

Two years later AuCoin won a seat in the Legislature from Washington County. By 1974, when Republican Wendell Wyatt decided to retire from Congress after five terms, AuCoin had risen to majority leader in the Oregon House. He was the unanimous choice for the Democratic nomination among legislators from the 1st District.

With that support and a forceful campaign leveling most of its criticism at the Nixon administration, AuCoin had little trouble winning the nomination over four lesser-known candidates.

His Republican opponent, the former di-

rector of the state Department of Environmental Quality, was equally articulate and had Wyatt's strong endorsement. But labor and education groups helped provide AuCoin with a better organization than the GOP could put together in the year of Watergate resentment. AuCoin stressed his legislative record, pointing specifically to pension reform, energy policy and tax relief measures that came out of committees he chaired. He carried every county in the district that year.

Although AuCoin has never been one of the most visible House members on the national scene, he has been careful to keep his name before a statewide public in Oregon, and he has always been considered a likely statewide candidate at some point in the future. He thought about a Senate campaign against Republican Bob Packwood in 1980, but decided against it. He would be a leading contender for the Senate in 1984 if Republican Sen. Mark O. Hatfield decided to retire.

Committees

Appropriations (27th of 36 Democrats)
Defense; Interior.

Elections

1982 General			
Les AuCoin (D)	118,638	(54%)	
Bill Moshofsky (R)	101,720	(46%)	
1982 Primary			
Les AuCoin (D)	49,337	(82%)	
Robert Magid (D)	11,094	(18%)	
1980 General			
Les AuCoin (D)	203,532	(66%)	
Lynn Engdahl (R)	105,083	(34%)	
Previous Winning Percentages:			
1974 (56%)	1978 (63%)	1976 (59%)	

District Vote For President

1980		1976	
D	96,633 (38%)	D	92,985 (43%)
R	119,438 (47%)	R	112,179 (53%)
I	28,388 (11%)		

Campaign Finance

	Receipts	Receipts from PACs	Expenditures
1982			
AuCoin (D)	\$484,931	\$248,736 (51%)	\$458,902
Moshofsky (R)	\$538,965	\$102,157 (19%)	\$569,779
1980			
AuCoin (D)	\$294,491	\$117,754 (40%)	\$308,507
Engdahl (R)	\$77,058	\$5,553 (7%)	\$76,178

Voting Studies

Year	Presidential Support		Party Unity		Conservative Coalition	
	S	O	S	O	S	O
1982	30	61	76	7	15	71
1981	29	55	67	11	15	67
1980	62	26	20	13	21	62
1979	77	16	69	20	28	64
1978	59	27	57	29	31	52
1977	58	32	73	20	22	69
1976	29	53	57	22	30	48
1975	34	54	68	19	24	58

S = Support O = Opposition

Key Votes

Reagan budget proposal (1981)	N
Legal services reauthorization (1981)	Y
Disapprove sale of AWACs planes to Saudi Arabia (1981)	Y
Index income taxes (1981)	N
Subsidize home mortgage rates (1982)	Y
Amend Constitution to require balanced budget (1982)	N
Delete MX funding (1982)	Y
Retain existing cap on congressional salaries (1982)	Y
Adopt nuclear freeze (1983)	Y

Interest Group Ratings

Year	ADA	ACA	AFL-CIO	CCUS
1982	85	10	94	26
1981	70	14	79	13
1980	83	25	39	54
1979	68	29	58	44
1978	40	40	60	42
1977	65	35	91	25
1976	70	22	61	25
1975	74	14	71	6